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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000163

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958 DECL: 02/01/2020
TAGS PREL, PGOV, KDEM, MOPS, ECON, KE, ET
SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY OTERO'S MEETING WITH ETHIOPIAN
PRIME MINISTER MELES ZENAWI - JANUARY 31, 2010

Classified By: Under Secretary Maria Otero for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (SBU) January 31, 2010; 4:15 p.m.; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2. (SBU) Participants:
U.S. Under Secretary Otero Assistant Secretary Carson NSC Senior Director for African Affairs Michelle Gavin PolOff Skye Justice (notetaker)
Ethiopia Prime Minister Meles Zenawi Special Assistant Gebretensae Gebremichael

Summary

3. (C) Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero his government placed no restrictions on

4. (C) Meles said the GoE is not enthusiastic about Kenya's Jubaland initiative, but is sharing intelligence with Kenya and hoping for success

Foreign Funding of CSOs Antithetical to Democratization

5. (C) Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told U/S Otero the development of a strong democracy and civil society is the only way Ethiopia can ensure

6. (C) Meles said his country's inability to develop a strong democracy was not due to insufficient understanding of democratic principles, but
ADDIS ABAB 00000163 002 OF 003
internalized those principles. Ethiopia should follow the example of the U.S. and European countries, he said, where democracy developed organi

7. (C) Meles drew a clear distinction between Ethiopians' democratic and civil rights on the one hand, and the right of foreign entities to fu

GoE Will Hold Free and Fair Elections, Despite Opposition

8. (C) Meles assured U/S Otero that Ethiopia's upcoming electoral process will be free, fair, transparent, and peaceful. The GoE has learned f

9. (C) Meles told U/S Otero he feared a repeat of the 2005 violence, and that many opposition members were not interested in peaceful electior

10. (C) Meles recalled that in 2005, he had told opposition leaders in the presence of the diplomatic corps that they should not believe forei
ADDIS ABAB 00000163 003 OF 003

11. (C) In an extended discussion in response to Meles' comments, U/S Otero, A/S Carson, and Ms. Gavin noted that Ethiopia's forthcoming elect

Ethiopia Not Enthusiastic About Jubaland Initiative

12. (C) Meles said he had been briefed extensively regarding Kenya's Jubaland initiative. Because Ethiopia had previously intervened in Somali

GoE Prepared to Move Forward from Copenhagen

13. (C) U/S Otero urged Meles to sign the Copenhagen accord on climate change and explained that it is a point of departure for further discus

No Promises on Liberalizing Telecoms, Banking

14. (C) U/S Otero and A/S Carson encouraged Meles to hasten steps to liberalize the telecommunications and banking industries in Ethiopia, and